

Minutes

Scrutiny Committee

Venue:	Microsoft Teams - Remote
Date:	Thursday, 25 February 2021
Time:	5.00 pm
Present remotely via Teams:	Councillors S Shaw-Wright (Chair), W Nichols (Vice-Chair), A Lee, N Reader, M Topping, R Sweeting and J McCartney
Officers present remotely via Teams:	Dave Caulfied – Director of Economic Regeneration and Place, Victoria Foreman – Democratic Services Officer
Others present remotely via Teams:	Phil Sayles – Principal at Selby College, Dave Barber – Executive Headteacher at Ebor Academy Trust, Tim Moat - Director of Communications and Development at Ebor Academy Trust, Andrew Dixon – Strategic Planning Manager at North Yorkshire County Council Children’s and Young People’s Service, Jane Le Sage – Assistant Director for Inclusion at North Yorkshire County Council Children’s and Young People’s Service, Amanda Newbold – Assistant Director for Education and Skills at North Yorkshire County Council Children’s and Young People’s Service

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Ellis.

37 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

38 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 November 2020 for signing by the Chair.

39 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair announced that agenda item 6 – Corporate Performance Report Quarter 2 – July to September 2020 would be deferred and considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee also noted that the order of business on the agenda would be amended in order for agenda item 5 – Work Programme to be taken at the end of the meeting.

40 EDUCATION IN SELBY DISTRICT - REVISITED

The Chair and Committee welcomed to the meeting the following attendees:

- Phil Sayles – Principal at Selby College
- Dave Barber – Executive Headteacher at Ebor Academy Trust
- Tim Moat - Director of Communications and Development at Ebor Academy Trust
- Andrew Dixon – Strategic Planning Manager at North Yorkshire County Council Children’s and Young People’s Service
- Jane Le Sage – Assistant Director for Inclusion at North Yorkshire County Council Children’s and Young People’s Service
- Amanda Newbold – Assistant Director for Education and Skills at North Yorkshire County Council Children’s and Young People’s Service

North Yorkshire County Council

The representatives from North Yorkshire County Council spoke first and gave a detailed presentation covering matters related to education in the district, including Covid-19 outbreak management, the upcoming reopening of schools on 8 March 2021, special educational needs (SEN) school provision, pupil exclusions and absences, home education, the Selby Hub and the Selby Locality Board.

Members asked questions following on from the presentation, firstly relating to the proposed SEN school in Osgodby. Members noted the feelings of local people on the scheme and how the application and plans for it had been handled. Officers confirmed that the school would provide for a range of children with various needs, and that progress with its development had been delayed due to Covid-19. There had been positive discussions with both the academy trust and the Department for Education in relation to the school and its design.

The Committee noted that initial discussions had been undertaken with local residents about the school, but that designs had moved on since

that point; Members were reassured that residents would be given the opportunity to make their concerns known and to have a right to reply as part of the statutory planning process. The next step for the project was timelines.

Officers explained to the Committee some other pieces of work that had been completed or were in hand, including extensions at Hambleton and Staynor Hall Primaries, an extension to the Sherburn Hungate Primary School in the summer, expansion work at Barlby Common Primary School, and lastly the plan to keep Kirk Fenton Primary under review.

Members noted the potential for a new settlement at Burn and expansion of housing in Eggborough, and the resulting effects of these on education in these areas, as well as the use of developer contributions, such as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 payments. The Committee also asked about the increase in school admission appeals, particularly in relation to transport.

Councillor W Nichols left the meeting at this point and did not return.

Officers explained that the education, health and care plans for pupils were more robust than the previous statements; a pupil's needs were drawn together and addressed as a whole, with the care plans also being more enforceable. Parents and carers had stronger powers and there were strict timelines to adhere to; the right to a tribunal was still included, but with additional steps for mediation.

The Director of Economic Regeneration and Place assured the Committee that the Council had worked closely with colleagues in education from North Yorkshire County Council when developing the new Local Plan; education need in the district had been clearly identified.

A question was raised regarding the potential for significant development in and around Tadcaster, and the need for more school places. Officers confirmed that this had been considered and that detailed discussions about this were ongoing. Members were interested to note that there was currently a surplus of places in Tadcaster primary schools, but that the availability of secondary school places was more complex.

Ebor Academy Trust

The Committee then heard from the representatives from Ebor Academy Trust who gave an overview of the schools in their estate, how they had coped with the pandemic, and how there may be further changes to some of their schools.

The Ebor Academy Trust comprised 24 schools in total. Members noted the challenges posed by remote learning during the lockdown, and that the trust were pleased to see schools returning from 8 March 2021. Access to the internet had been an issue for some families from deprived areas, which in turn lead to challenges around assessments, pupil

feedback and the monitoring of lessons. Flexibility had been essential, and real progress had been made regarding improved collaborative working due to more remote learning; whilst it had been challenging, the trust had learned a great deal throughout the pandemic.

Members were pleased that attendance and engagement had been generally good, with attendance within the trust's schools higher than the national average; there had been an ongoing focus on wellbeing, for which there was a strong plan in place. The notice that had been given ahead of schools reopening had been very useful and allowed the trust to prepare fully for the return of pupils.

Selby College

The Principal of Selby College gave Members an update as to how the college had fared throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee noted that students had adapted to remote learning relatively well and that changes to the college had created a Covid-safe environment. The college had seen a few cases of coronavirus, but these had not been because of internal transmission. Some classes were maintained on campus, such as those that were practical in nature, but most students had moved to remote learning.

Members were pleased to hear that preparations were underway for the return of students in March, including the scaling up of lateral flow testing on campus. Teacher-led assessments would progress so that students could move on to the next step of their education. Covid-19 had been the primary challenge in the past year, but despite this there had still been positive developments for the college, including capital investments, becoming a training partner for Siemens Mobility in Goole, sponsorship from Drax Power (investment from which aided STEM education) and preparations for the delivery of the college's three 'T' levels of technical qualification.

The Principal explained that the college was also keen to do more to support 16- to 24-year-old NEETS (young people not in education, employment or training) by supporting pupils transitioning to college, working with employer partners, continuing educational apprenticeships and maintaining the vast majority of students on courses.

Members thanked all the guests for attending the meeting of the Committee, and expressed their pride in education in the district, including Selby College and its work, for all it did for young people across the district.

41 WORK PROGRAMME

Members briefly considered the work programme and noted that the item on housing repairs would now be considered at the meeting of the committee in March 2021.

RESOLVED:

To note the 2020-21 work programme.

The meeting closed at 6.34 pm.